MY BROTHER VICTOR

BY

LOUIS M. ELSHEMUS

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My Brother Victor

A Convalescent's Fancy

by

LOUIS M. ELSHEMUS

(Born February 4th, 1864)

The Memorie was written at Paris, France, in the author's twenty-third year; while studying Art at Julian's.

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My Brother Victor

Fancy! trip to me, and bring:
Fresh and rural picturing!
Fancy never is at home?
Now she lets me gladly roam
Thro the farm, o'er lawn, passed haw:
Where my youth but pleasures saw,
Nothing more!—Oh! far away
From Father's ingle; from the cay
That whistled thro the tulip-top;
When Peter's face flushed, because the crop
Had ten cart-loads, and more;
Too much for our small granary-floor!

Far away from home I be—
Yet Fancy lets me roam, and see
My home! Oh! Fancy is at home.
For now with Fancy do I roam:
Thro orchards, glades, o'er hills and knolls.
Where yet their freshness him consoles
Who must be lone, and know:
One, who shared them, is in glow!
Fancy brings the past more close!
Fancy blooms the budding rose
Of reverie! to recollection gives
A flower-face, that ever blushing lives!

Ay! the embers lighted are;
The ingle flickers as a star!
Flash the yellow flames—behold:
They vanish thro the chimney old!
(How may I turn away from him,
Whose sweet face the Angels limn:
Their dear pastime! Victor mine,
Who is now in realms divine.)
As the flames flicker and upward flapp,
I'm back at home, where drowsy Napp,
Our dog, was wont to lie, and snore:
For no knocking at the door
Made him bark, and rise to bite
At a burglar late at night.
How the flames take Fancy fond
Back to the days of fall, beyond
That sad day of thy early death,
When all wept!

Autumn blew; the laurel-wreath
Girded our waists; we kept
Tally when we won or lost,
While the tusky disk we tossed!
Days of biting air, yet mellow.
For the medlars would soon be yellow.
Hardening, pulped the crabs; and some
Fell down, to carry home.
Apples hung on trees, whose leaves
Were sere and few; and crumpled sheaves
Lay supine: for crows and rooks
To forage—if—for their snug nooks.
And the fragrant pear was lush;
And the late plum—as soft plush
Covering Mary's neck, when blows
Bracing March, and oft it snows—
Was its peal; we bit its flesh
Tasting sugared wine all fresh.

O Brother Victor! how we spent
Those autumn-hours in merriment!
Laurel Hill! charm of the bank
Leading, from where the robins drank
Rain-drops, collected in some rindle,
To the bridge, where we oft did kindle
Faggots joyfully—building fires
Near the sorrel-tinted briers.
The bank, from Belleville, snug and fair,
To gay Newark-town, and where
Rifles, cartridges, we found.
Laurel Hill! Fond manor-ground!
Swift Passaic streams by;
Far, the Blue Hills touch the sky
With a breath of haze, as blue
As up there the real sky grew.
Laurel Hill! and though 'tis now
As some cloister-haunted vow:
Bleak, dilapidated, lorn,
When I dream o' it, as the morn,
My thoughts widen: for I see,
Shouting, smiling, thee,
Gay **Victor**; as in life: a boy,
Pledged to nature's moods of joy.
Victor! we shall chatter here
Of the charms of the dying year.

How, of mornings, had we used
By the nut-trees grow enthused!
Where the pond the quivering leaves
Made tremble; and the single seeves
Rustled the frozen herbs so sear,
While, afar, the chanticleer
Signalled that for the breakfast-table
More eggs would be, all palatable;
None boiled t' excess, cold, fresh,
As the kernels from the thresh.
Aft' crackling the half-frosted twigs,
We sought, as the wild boar digs
For his morning's forest-set,
Nuts, and roots, with acorns wet;
We sought, all our pockets filled,
Till, as goblets o'erfreighted, spilled
Many of the hickory-nuts; and we
Held some in our hands, aglee!
And, as squirrels on a tree
Ate we, singing merrily:
Songs, we heard by church and school;
Or we framed by the flower-girt pool.
Then, as chipmunks, pert and couth,
We, like effervescent Youth,
Scampered, tagged each other round;
Till we lay upon the ground,
Tired. Then the split, brown burrs,
Strown, as torn and grizzly furs
Of foxes in the depth of tangle,
We stamped briskly; till a wrangle,
As the lambkin's for the lusher
Tendril, made us redden flusher
Than the beechen leaf, that pended
All its glow, where the sun fair-spended
More calescent rays. We ate
Chestnuts, as they grew in state
Of wild nature; how the trees
Swayed canorously in ease
With the freezing, strength'ning breeze!
How they shouted, as some glorious
Victor; then, like Stentor furious,
Hallooed they, called uproarious—
Blowing, never being injurious.
We left the nut-grove then, when far,
Lonely, the clear moon
Motioned, as a scud, along;

While the sun shone bright and strong!
Shivered the low bush: and fruits
Dropped, while the briers sprung new shoots,
Lasting a few hours, sun-willed.
Only till the even filled
All the country with a bluster;
And the jack-daws dibble, and cluster
Round the bare ash, roosting there
Waiting for next morning's fare.
Nodded all the tall crisp grasses;
Frilled the crows, as in black masses
Dotted they, and blotched the woods:
Bare, grey-green, with comical hoods,
Browned with spreading spruces wide;
Pennonned with gay bands, that, pied
In red, yellow, scarlet, fluttered
Here and there!—Afar, there muttered
Voices from a thousand throats:
Seeming, as, by willow-trimmed moats,
Quack the lawyers of the mires;
Never willing to change attires,
Ever, in the same long gown,
Quizzing th' innocents of the town!
Or, as in some money-mart,
Cry the brokers; and there dart
Clerks, all to and fro, with haste
In their faces, and with waste
In their limbs; until the room
Sounds as Babel, when in doom.
So those voices filled the bright'ning
Atmosphere; while fast, in fright-ning
Darts, the sun sent heralds round
To warm the trees, and steam the ground.
We grew joyful! For then we ran
To the knoll: upon the lawn, we roasted
Nuts, and all the spoils we boasted
Of having picked. Then from the fields,
One good chase from where our shields
'Gainst the cold were blazing, fair and free,
We dug the frosted glebe, to see
Apples of the soil quick tender us
Nutriment farinaceous;
Those we threw into the flames.
Eager, waited we: as dames,
Who, culinary tit-bits in their thought,
Serve patience, till is wrought

VICTOR GOTTFRIED EILSHEMIUS

As he looked in 1874, one year before his death, in his 13th year.

LOUIS M. EILSHEMIUS

At the age of eleven. The author describes the days prior to the time when the photos were taken.

What sciential seasoning
Or wise leavening could bring.
Oh! and how those black potatoes,
Fresh as from Iberia's plateaus,
Laughed: as shining Africans
Whinze delight, when a white man tans
Under their hot heavens.
Then, the peal off, we munched away:
Ate, as Kaffirs, by Binghai,
So around the crackling blaze
Sat we: eating, to amaze
The hare, sitting in surprise;
Or the robin; or the eyes
Of the wandering halk up there
Where the air is chill and spare.
Then we handled staves, to rake
The charred leaves; and we did break
Branches, to rekindle the dead
Fire! Oh! chestnuts split; then sped
All their softened pulp within
Our greedy mouths. With smile and grin
We sat there: calm-eating away:
As on mounds, by warm Cathay,
Munch the people betel-nuts.
Then, with roots and crooked butts,
We scattered the leaves and ashes white;
And the logs with boyish might.
And the twigs and knarled stems;
Till the blaze's glowing hems
Vanished. And, with shout and leap,
Off we romped; and then to keep
Couthest chatter of old tales
We had heard in other vales:
By the Elbe, all romantic;
By the Neckar, where the antic
Yearly builds his booth to live
And to villagers new products give!
By the Rhone, and Arve swift,
Where, o'er th' mounts, the large fogs lift;
And the distant warm-gold snow
Peeps thro rocks, reared in mural row!
There, where Leman lips the Rhone;
Where Geneva-town in freedom shone.
By the gushing Rhine. Oh! far
Where the black, wild forests are;
By those Lakes, that gem the vales

Where demurely float the sails:
By Lugano, Lucern so sweet
Nestled boonly at Pilatus' feet.
By Suabia's incradled town,
Where the King's great park, his own,
Seems a labyrinth of pleasure
For the good man e'er a treasure!
By the bare cliffs of Savoie,
Where the marmot and the boy
Tell of poverty; still, where
All hearts beat tenderly and fair,
Oh! the tales we heard, together,
Mong' the flowers, in the heather:
Chasing the quick bird; in woods,
Where the wild bear prowls, and broods;
In the huts of comely folk;
At the heads of oxen in a golden yoke;
By the carts, by asses drawn;
By the wood-men, chests all brawn,
Where their charcoal fires they
Whiff, as smoke from pipes of clay.
By the castles, shut from view;
By broad oaken avenue.
By lorn ruins, built on crags,
Where the idiot, staring, swags:
As a cur at a stranger's words.
Where the warble of the birds
Harmonized with the sprinkling rains
On the eaves, where Charlemagne
Once had pondered his bold wars:
He grasped his engraven silvern torse;
He cuffed his hands, and casqued his head:
Then his sword the battle led!
While we slept below the elms,
Where pass men with gilded helms
In the hustle of the street:
Facing, where the horses meet
The huge triumphal portal, built
All after blood and gold were spilt!
By the silent waters flowing:
Where once Caesar passed, a-blowing
Trumpets for a siege, world-known.
Those tales we recalled in our wood-bower:
Where the rampant suckle-flower
Clung to the ornate rustic frame;
And it had thy dear, fond name!

Named in recollections of
Thy goodness—thy sweet, saintly love
So truthful. (Summer-house! now lorn,
With thy vines and tendrils, torn
By forgetfulness. I sat
On thy narrow steps, begat,
Under thy cone-roof, stern lines;
And as one who ne'er repines
I had blessed thy ruin; for
Thy soiled roof, thy riddled floor,
And those bare vines, pending still
As the weeping withers o'er a sill
Of a cottage, whose gay souls
All have gone—for yet those boles,
Framing thy fair prettiness,
Still wear the same flower-dress
As when Victor watched with me:
How the suckle fed the bee
How the birds had tried to grasp
The retreating building-wasp.
How the butterflies fluttered gay.
How the humming-bird his nectar
Drank; and, as some wise inspector
Peeped the mavis; while the merl
Perched and whistled, while a pearl
Floated in the beam serene
Of the sun: it was the sheen
Of a swarm of silvery flies
Such that hover o'er flower-sighs
When the perfumes volatize!
There we fretted the clear wind
With boy-stories; while the rind
Of the near dead cherry creaked—
The bare branches of the hickory squeaked;
And the tall pine, hemlock trim;
While in every feeble limb
Of the golden-rain there swayed
Some odd impulse, as if dismayed
At the cooler breath of the fall.
And the graceful ash-trees, the bushes small;
The distant birch-trees, and the beech
All waved, with responsive speech,
To the friendly wind. And when
We grew weary of telling of the Senn
Of the Grütli, Tyrolese—
Down we laughed, to where the trees

Bordered the fresh kitchen-garden:
(It was free, with no gruff warden!)
Where some lagging melons dozed
By their lemon leaves. We tozed
All we could; and pumpkin too;
And fine water-melons: the few
Lusher ones we dragged out, and ate!

Oh! **Victor!** then fast bounded we
O'er the lawns to where the blea
Of the button-tree browsed is:
For there passes the swift sluice
To the byre, where the kine
Lie; and where the horses, swine,
And the fowl, and hound, and birds
Live, a-joy! Where the fresh milk curds
Below the window of the barn;
Where the stables cleanly kept
The cart-house, and fond enslept
John, the horse: fox-hued was his hide
Gentle as a palfrey; if tried,
He but showed such gentleness
That a child could him caress.
Where we whetted our knife;
Where strong Peter's blowsy wife
Used to hatchet the cocks' necks;
Or to dot the stone with specks
Of rich blood from chicks and hens;
Where the hay-cart stood, and pens
Of pigs were in confusion piled—
Where the scythe dreamed, half beguiled
Of harvest-days, and hours of summer;
Where the vertical gutters were green
With graceful vines; where stood in sheen
The barn, tiled roof, and spire:
Conqueror of the storm's swift fire.
Where disorder kept one nook—
And chaste order hung on a hook—
Or lay on shelves; and neatly there
Folded down the blankets; where
White Spitzy frolicked daily—**there**
There, dear **Victor,** harnassed we
Jack, with shout and jollity.
Jack, oh! cunning Jack! so dumb
When you called, he would not come.
If it pleased him—hm! then he

Was full of alacrity:
As a rosy face that smells
Nearby sweetmeats, bread and mells,
Jack, our Jack! and he, our friend,
Who took us to our world's end,
Whose back bore our cudg'ling brisk;
Who could run, and halt and frisk.
Who could lie down, then seem as dead
As a beetle, when you tread
On its vital body small,
Will not budge, and will not crawl
Away—until it scents none near.
Jack, our donkey; cherished dear:
He was of the sacred breed,
A cross on his back, knees slim—
Black the cross, and brown his hair—
On his nose a white spot fair;
And his ears mobile and long.
Small he was, yet proud and strong.
His was a Judaean dame:
As thro old Jerusalem
Walked an ass thro the populace,
Thronging round a lovely face;
That ass bore the Christ adown
The palm-trimmed avenue of the town:
When gay mattings fell before
Each slow step of him who bore
Holy Jesu, worshipped loud
By the saints and by the crowd;
"Allehu" sang the girls,
And acclaims from golden curls;
Rung the clay-abodes! How beamed
Every face, as though each dreamed
To be there, not in the day,
But in the night, far, far away!
And his faultless, ancient sire
May have brayed by towered Tyre,
Or Palmyra shaded him
With a grove of date-palms slim.
And Aleppo could have shown
How her maidens, with palm-crown,
Offered honor to their beasts
Of burden when gay feasts
Tincled; and their clamors rose.
These they wreathed with flowers,
Or with palms from Sidon's bowers

Near the calm, clear Red Sea's waters.
Then, with shouts and bell-like laughters,
Led the maidens ass and ass on:
Seeming, as when cloudlets pass on
Some June-evening's fading sky:
Figures, garlands, weave slow by,
Till the heavens change to lakes,
Cities, avenues, where wakes
Gayest feast-procession, teeming
With the glow of Persian dreaming!
Jack was born where Jersey's hills
Rise from the wide marsh, that chills
The lone habitant; where we gazed,
Victor, and myself, amazed
On earth's light.
Then my Victor harnessed him:
Nervous, yet with staunch-pressed limb,
'Gainst the shaft, when he pulled fast
At the leather band. And, at last,
Patted Jack's warm, snuffling nose;
Then, as some Comanche throws
His lithe body on his pony,
Ready to ride o'er the far, stony
Llano Estacado, where
The boiling Pecos' currents tear,
Victor threw his tender frame
In the cart, where I, in shame
That I let him harness all,
Lay as some small craven thrall:
Couched, as some gay squaw, all on
A prairie-vehicle. Alone
He drove, and I sat whistful by.
Shouted we; and he did cry
Loud as "bucks" in forest-closes,
When a tomahawk reposes
In the giant-pine's vaste rind.
Screamed we joyously, half blind;
As, from ambuscades, the Sioux
Shrill their victory, when ooze
From the scalped golden locks
Streams of blood upon the rocks:
Jutting, peeked, erratic laid
'Bout the carmine cactus-glade!
Victor jerked at the reins; and see:
Jack race up the hill, to be
All so soon near to the pound,

Where the cows lay on the ground;
And the goats browsed colored leaves;
Where were moulding over-sheaves
Of the fattest harvest.
There we sped by the hemlock-row,
And light fence of arbor-vitae.
Up we hurried, as a fighter
In the passes of the Enger,
Seeming as some bold avenger:
In his chariot, fiery-wheeled,
'Gainst the army unrevealed
Of strong Hannibal:
Flanks he th' corseletted foe;
Aims at hemlets; while there grow
Regiments abaft the cliff;
Yet he draws his vital whiff,
Standing in his chariot there
With wide-flowing russet hair:
Staunch as palms that brave the sands
Huge-swept by Sirocco's brands!
So my Victor urged him to race.
And we covered varied space,
Till we passed the orchard sweet
Where the birds flew, singing, fleet.
Passed the pond, the hickory-brake;
Dashing to the dense wood's lake.
There we halted; for to hold
Laugh-dalliance with the fishes gold:
They that bassetted in delight
Till silver-sparkles breeded bright,
As the sun-rays caught their oars
Lustring them; as, on sea-shores,
Conchs and muscles gem the sand—
Oft, in sinuous, surf-simulating band!
There we culled the late fae-berry,
Where the robins hopped a-merry.
There we saw the jasper-snake
Flash through the glittering forest-lake.
And the falcon's shadow saw,
And the hawk's near-grasping claw.
There we followed rooks; and screamed
When afar some eagle gleamed!
Jack must farther trott along
On the level road, with a song:
As the vintners', when they lag
On the frosty hill. With a jag,

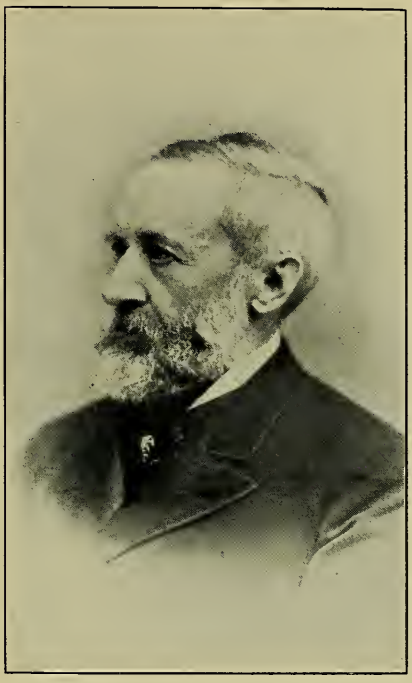
A jostle, and hump, we birred agay.
Then we seemed, oh! anyway
Victor grew as Achilles stern.
When the Trojans, urn and urn
Burnt, to offer to the gods
O'er fallen Troy's surrounding sods:
He the vanquisher of them,
Tied great Hector's battle-hem
To his fleeting car; and whirled
'Round the walls; while thick dust swirled
'Bout the rolling heavy wheels;
And upon the tortured, seals
Of death grew, as Achilles pulled
The strong reins on the roan, whose mane
Streamed in waves of the swell
Of the wind; so, with a boy-thrilled yell,
That was meant for me, we sped
O'er the road—bent was the head
Of Jack, while we were now beguiled
By the waning scents of flowers:
On the road; or hid in bowers
Of some vine-girt tree: where bees,
Wasps, butterflies, and companies
Of late insects whirred and chirred,
Hummed, or fluttered, or demurred.
Passed the Bartlett's sugared fruit;
By the larger cherry-root,
Mossy from bearing years and years;
By the apple-trees.
Passed the long flower-beds, where in May
The green snakes 'midst berries stay;
And the vair asp oft would hide
By the reddening streamlet's side.
Where the merl hopped; and the rook
And the robin, from his nook,
Flew, to pick some berry—then flee.
There the rows of strawberry
On lush strawberry did sheen:
Crimson, yellow, or bright green;
And their fruits of virgin white—
Or of rose-like tint, so bright.
And, where the hortyard smiles, there stirred
The azure-winged bird,
And slurred the wilding, orange-red.
Passed the Bergamot, the oriole fled;
Where the cherries flushed, or seemed

LAUREL HILL MANSION

Now forming the northern section of Arlington, N J., as it looked in 1869. Forty acres of land, gardens, fields, and picturesque woods, running back of the mansion.

CECILE E. EILSHEMIUS

Likeness of the author's mother in 1874. Died at 84 years of age in 1909



HENRY G. EILSHEMIUS

Likeness of the author's father in 1889. Died at the age of 74 in 1891

LAWN IN FRONT OF LAUREL HILL MANSION

In the middle distance flows the Passaic River. The hills on the other side are part of the Orange Mts., N. J. (Note the tall tulip tree, 190 feet, on the left of lawn; at that time the only tall ones in New Jersey.)

As pale jonquils, the sparrows dreamed;
And where Pippin's blushed, and where
Greenings were cradled in the air,
Sweetly fragrant, the bees were lost:
Erring in the honeyed most,
Thro the freshness of the breeze,
Oozing, as through flowering trees.
Or where the tortuous medlar bended—
All its soft brown fruits had spended
Sweets for delicacies at dessert—
There the butterflies did flirt
With their leaf-like fruits, opening half:
As for sheer joy they would laugh.
By a hedge of hemlocks sage;
By an elm, whose far-spent age
Let the ivy twine around,
Languorously—as some swound
Of a passion-sickened slave
Round the memories, that have
Had their satiating pleasures done!
By the housebote's niche, where run
Eglantines, and flaunting suckles,
And some stray hen picks and chuckles,
Till her chicks hustle quickly; by
Chestnut-trees aglowing we did fly;
At the Greek-tea-house stopped we:
Where two lions, as Sphinxes be,
(On whose heads white doves would sit)
Crouch on either side of it.
Seeming like a temple small,
Pillared, with one roofed hall;
Fluted columns; cornice cut
To bloom-wreaths; not to be shut,
To be open for sweet leisure
Of the passer-by, and for pleasure.
The wild cherry-trees, so short:
Delicate-limbed, with sweet tort
Of their umbrate whipples, grew.
And the pine-trees, with openings through
Their dark green, let shine the rays
O' the sun on cloudless days.
Near, fond swarms of birds were pent
Vocalizing in the air all calm;
And from spruce-trees wafted balm;
Resin, gum, and racy aurae:
Such that Moses, when in Moroe,

Swung before his Ethiop-wife.
And the murrey beads were rife:
Those the songsters picked, unharmed;
And the red-fruit, rubi-charmed,
Of the ifle, glistened in the clear
Autumn's freshest atmosphere!
Far, thro crests of cedars, oaks,
Lindens, whom the ivy cloaks,
Elms, sweet maples, chestnuts gaunt,
Birches, ash-trees, those that vaunt
To bear small berries of erubescence,
Flusher than the effervescence
Of joy upon a maiden's cheek—
Far—thro these, the hills would gleam:
Blue, or rosy; white church-spires
Silvered o'er the village far withdrawn.
And aside the trees, there glistened ever
Specks of the quivering river.
Then rolled the cart swift o'er the lawn;
Thro shade, and passed the ice-house, where
The victuals waited patiently:
Iced, and quiet: as those men,
Mummied, sit in their dungeon-den
By Cusco bare; sit forever there
Sit and sit—with blank, cold stare.
Then down to where the bascule's pale
Hung its golden letters large:
Golden as upon some barge
That the Aegaean seas had plied;
Thick-embossed letters wide
Orned the stern: to thus make known
To sister-crafts what name they own.
Each on one side of the gate
Two stones, orned, square, stood in state;
Upon whose decks were ancient vases
Green by vitriol-burnish and with age.
As old Latimus' vases they:
With flowers velutinous; a short spray
Of the bleeding-heart; the dahlia;
Sweet vagaries of blooming hours;
Dropping o'er them fancy-showers;
Or, in glum gloom, petalling
Croons of noxial sorrowing!
And the wall of stone stopped there:
Mural bournes, where in March air
Thro the winter-hutched mounds

Of seared leaves the crocus wounds,
With its lemon head, the mould;
Or the virgin-snowdrops cold
Delibate the air's excess
Of Spring's clement tepidness,
Or the hastive anemone
Pricks the twiglets, as if she
Would to enmilken the brown turf
When yet chilleth the cool earth.
There the busky chestnuts fluted
As if their songs were all transmuted
To a spirit-joyaunce—as
When, the soul a-over, pass
Angel-whispers, bringing bliss—
From Jehovah a soft kiss!
Then Jack rollicked us adown
The high-road, that leadeth to the town.
There the water-front doth slope
Pine-groves darken; goats must grope
When they search for slender saplings
Fear imbues the vagous straplings
When they clamber down, to lave
Their heads within Passaic's swift wave.
Passed cook Ellen's hut, where clung
Hops; and beans their long stems hung;
And the gallinaceous cackling's rose
Where some impoverished lumber chose
To serve yet for a habitation:
For the poor, such lowly station!
We saw Ellen rushing wild
To her ruddy-cheeked child.
Laughed we all to see it cry;
Then we laughed—not dreaming why!
Down the public-road; till a steep
Rise frowned at us—slow pace to keep.
Then we saw the vines hang loose
Over button-trees: like a noose
Interlinked in other nooses they fell,
Intricate;—imperceptible
Where the tall grass raked the tangle
Seeming like serpents in a brangle
Coiling in a vision-air
All suspended, twining there.
And the smilax implicated
Its green leaves and flowers; mated
Thus with ivy and the grape,

Wild, bitter, of dwarfish shape,
And the broad, two-colored leaves of the plantain.
Then my Victor whipped Jack on:
Passed the white fence; passed the reeds,
Meadows; passed the mares and steeds
Hinnying—running—rearing—
Halting—'stonished—snuffling—leering!
Passed the marsh, where ravens croaked,
Passed the holt, where falcons poked
Their curved becks for hare or weasel;
Where grew wild the rue and teazel;
And thro trees—a labyrinth
Of branch and leaves, the widened plinth
Of our manor showed—and bland
Its turrets, as in an oriental land
Balconies, moucharabies
Tremble 'baft bloom-shrubs and trees
Of the ilex-graft and feathery ferns.

When the country-road discerns,
To the left, a draw-bridge white
Then our Jack knew well at sight
That his happy hoofs would turn
For a race homeward.
Passed the iron-gate flew we fleet;
By the low wall at whose feet
Runnelled on a ditch, all green.
To the left we saw aglee the sheen
Of the lawn, with its central vase.
How the lawn glides in a maze
Of white marghuerites and pinks
Upward to a wave, that rolls and sinks,
Gently to the carriage-road!
Here, brown stone-steps, and statues broad,
Glow; till a pillared piazza rises:
There the manor stands; no prizes
For its beauty ever have been known,
'Tis a structure all its own!
On we jostled, till a gate
Like the other made Jack wait.
Till I jumped out; and swung round
The bascule, making not one sound.

In the gloom of the cedar-grove
Slowly now my Victor drove.

An acclivity was here:
Soft as a sea-wave, when on a pier
Of some maritime town, an eye
Sees no harr harsh-hurtle by;
But he counts the chucks of spray:
As they whisperingly obey
The soft breeze's urging swell,
As they, bidding, them propell:
Chucking 'gainst the corded piers;
Spattering, so the seaman hears
That the sea-waves are not nigh,
That a half-rigged sloop could fly.
How the scents, salubrious,
Of the pines surrounded us!
How the stillness of the shade
Made us feel a bit afraid!
Then we passed the chestnut-tree
Whose bole did measure eight hands, free
In each pressed, and spread at length—
Till each pulled with all his strength!
Up: to left the oak-tree bore
Our swing, alas! which is no more!
Farther, to his kennel chained,
Brooded Napp, who had attained
Old age. On:—the mansion's wing all wide
On: the flower-garden we now espied;
Till in tangle of roofs and trees
Dwindled all.
Then to right: we whipped Jack on,
Lashing, shouting;
Attracting hens, and geese, and chicks;
And white Spitzy, while he licks
Tired Jack; who stood now still:
Waiting, breathing warmly, till
Victor should unharness him.
When, in the stable, every whim
Of his fancy asinine
He could harbor.

Then was mine
Utmost joy full realized,
Which my **Victor** half surmised;
For his face flushed radiantly,
As a drooped bloom suddenly
Peeps up in the fresh, air-laughters
Aft' the clouds have spent their waters.

Hurried we o'er the paved court:
As to some new-captured fort
Joyous warriors; or as girls
Draped in white robes, all in swirls
Run to groves, where in their scent
Bosom-friends flatter merriment!
By the cottage stood the well
With the bucket visible.
A few fan-tails sipped the drops
While all bloated were their crops.
Waddled passed the goody ducks,
Over boards, and waiting tucks;
And the cock chuckled, when a grub
Found he nigh a riddled tub;
While the hens crowded round, to cackle;
And 'mongst the wheels, and farm-yard tackle,
Broken hubs, the turkeys prided;
While the harmless snake back-glided
To the haw of evergreens,
Where below the tissue foxbell sheens.
Oh! we hurried to the well:
(How I love this pastime tell—
For, comes day, we ever pressed—
Till full bottles we caressed
With our lips. Knew that the sweet
Cider be the fall's most favorite treat.)
There a cider-press stood—fit
That our young weak arms could lift
The cover, and the screw could turn;
Till our bodies red would burn;
Till we saw the juice ooze slow
Round the barrel, builded so
That long slits would let the must
Sicker thro them; till it just
Flowed into the circling gutter,
Rushing round with wave and sputter!
Till an outlet gushed the cider
Into a wide pan—wide, wider
Than the tub that Ellen took
Ere she wrung the linen; or shook
All the sheets and napkins white.
So the pan filled; till, with might
Turned we; and more apples lay
Beneath the press. We sung away
While the golden fluid flowed
Round, like a runnell when a load

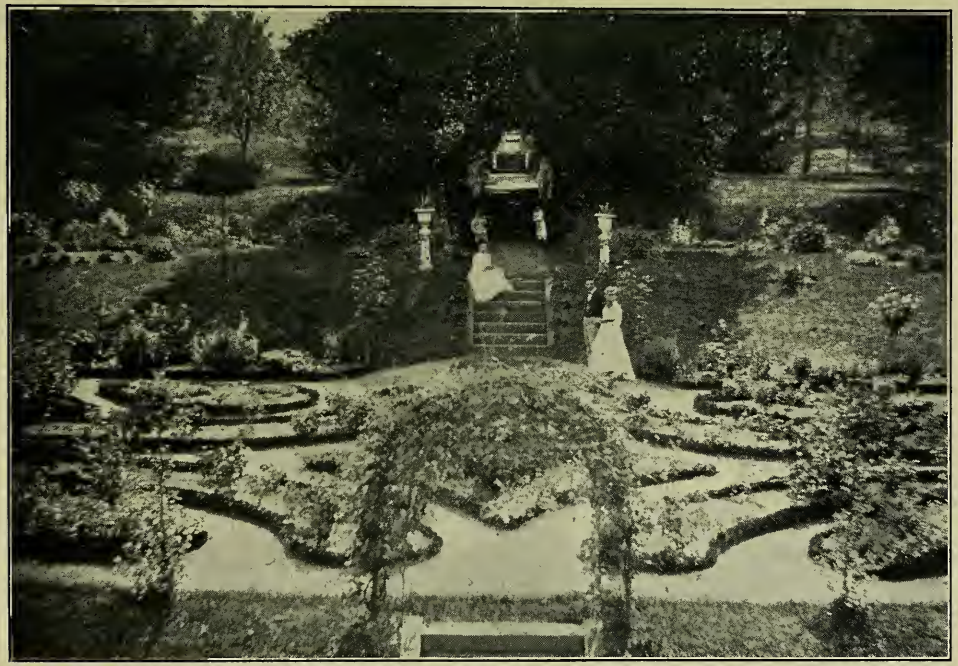
Of foam froths down a sudden narrow,
And its waters boil and harrow.
So the honey-cider gushed,
As though many winds had pushed,
From the spout into the pan
Where it heaved, and in circles ran.
Till when the scum danced near the brim,
Thick as when they old cream skim,
Pressed we no more so; but poured
Such sweet apple-must, adored,
Into bottles, waiting on the weeds
Lying careless there where feeds
The small insect on the leaves;
Or where grasses, as small seeves,
Topple to the pump's square trough,
Where they whisper secrets both.

Into bottles we poured it then:
Poured, till in a row stood ten;
Gorged, so that the foam would spill
Down the neck, and sparkle, till
Our lips had sipped; and we
Drank sweet cider joyously.
Sweet as mulse, the laborer loves;
Sugar-like, as under groves
Of the palm the Africans
Relish, drinking from fruit-pans:
Sweetest lagby-wine; or pure
As the vintner's minious lure;
Or as soft and soothing seemed
As that wine, the ancients dreamed
Of, when, thro fair gardens, they
Walked the idle hours away.

How we bent our arms; our hands
Held the necks, as in those lands
Where boozy Bacchus yet hath sway:
On Scio-isle; by Baia-bay:
Fair Chianti; and those knolls
Where around the Tiber rolls;
Or where Aetna once a year
Looses its wild fires' fear:
By Palermo, where Malta's holt
Comino and Gozzo-town exalt.
Where the giant grapes give wine
Sparkling as topaz-jewel, ashine:

By far San Joaquin, whose source
Down Mount Whitney digs a course;
And whose valley broader grows
As to Millerton it flows,
Where the vineyards view the Chain
Across a fertile grazing-plain!
As in lands, where Noah's breach
Of stern promise seems to teach
That sweet nectar hath deft power
To better prune the vineyard-bower;
Careful keep the south-hill-sides;
E'er watch that good soil provides
For juice-berries; so that no wool
Can crawl on them; that the tool
Sharp be, when the equal nights
Drift away from Aries-lights;
And that tapsters dexterously
Look to mutage, when the sky
Rolls huge golden clouds, and sheaves
Garnered are; and forest-leaves
Dance, in a myriad umber-tints;
That the casks be strong; and lints
Be prepared for leakages:
As in lands where the vintage sees
All gay, when rapt songs the season
Sings, to take away the head's clear reason;
And to gladden the stronger wit.
So we drank, and drank of it,
Never heeding if the sun
Seemed the gabel-tiles to con;
Or if from the byres flew
Turtle-doves; or if the sky's soft blue
Melted to a tone of grey
Dreaming to hear the curfew's lay.
Drank the cider sweet and gold,
Till to the pen, and hedged-in fold,
Huddled the sheep, grunted the swine;
Or by the olive-leaved wood-bine
Whirred the pigeon round its mate,
Till the hour grew still and late.
How we were elated then!
Singing as the trillering wren
When the weary monotone
Of the shower hath ceazed and gone.
How the bright carol cheers, and brings
On all glorious nature, things

THE GREEK TEA-HOUSE
On top of the left lawn of the grounds (1869.)



FLOWER GARDEN
At rear of Laurel Hill Mansion, as it looked in 1869.

Such man's art nor science create:
Feeling in the air: to quaintly mate
With those mysteries of the spheres,
When, tranced, the dreamer their wonders
hears!

Oh! then swung we neath the oak
Whose thick trunk had a mossy cloak.
Whose huge sinuating limbs
Dangled down short glabrous threads:
They were of the wild-vine. Squirrels ran
Up the tree, and on a span
Of the branches rested; nibbling fast
Nuts that lie in a boar's rich nast.
We did sing, as oft in joy
Both together: Cupid-boy
With rosy Psyche, out of breatn!
We did swing, as, with thick wreath
Of rare lotus, and the jassmine-bloom,
(By some sacred, sculpted tomb)
On some lianen-vines black braids
And black locks enliven the Fo-grove shades.
Or as when the heavy bee
Rocks the crimson petals: see
There a swell swings stem and leaf;
But the bee came not to grief:
Tuneful swings it, fitfully—
Swings, as though it joyed for glee!

Now the grove grew dusky; across
The grey heavens fire-clouds did toss;
And a calm bespoke of rest.
As golden grew the dying west.
And the tree-crests fused, and shone
Like some war-lumed bastion!

As when maiden-shame, so pink,
At confiding speech doth sink,
Or as when a bride, so red,
Sleeps in quietude, when they are wed.
Or as a synosure, so ruthless
With a swarm of wooers truthless,
Brightens when some fair-locked face
Sues for him a love-pledged place
Near her: and she nestles sooth

In the trust of the valorous youth;
So the afternoon left the day;
And the evening's modulate lay
Spread in charming waves, reposed
On the byssine fllms, soft-rosed
That invested the air's bride
Ere she beautied in her wide
Folds of star-lit robes, as night:
Clear and blue as lazulite!

Then we plagued the pantry, where
Junkets, fruits, and apple, and pear,
Quince and plum, and peach and crab
Lay on shelves; or on a slab
Of the box, where pure white flour
Waited for the baking-hour.
Or we fretted the blazing range
Where our Ellen thought it strange
That our greedy fingers stole
What was best within the largest bowl!
Then, O Victor, we read books:
Taken from the library's nooks;
Where curiosos would delight
Spend the weary part of night.
Such works we dis-shelved, as had
In them nothing wry or bad.
But we selected books of travel;
Thoughts that one had to unravel.
Where the wanderer tells queer tales
Of the plains, and unknown vales;
Where the wise pen served the mind,
And the warm heart was but kind!
Oh! we loved to read of flowers;
Loved to learn of nature's powers.
And of animals so odd—
And of marvels of the God!
So the sable hours flew by;
Learning well, and silently;
We freed the brain of wild sedition
By sweet dreams, and erudition!
So the clock struck; cautioning
That the stairs called; and the ring
Drew us to our up-stairs-room:
Where, as 'tis each mortal's doom
Aft our prayers, with mother said,
All our thoughts to heaven had fled!

Fancy! heavenly provision
When our feelings' indecision
Runs amuck, as abdals fierce,
Longing some one's breast to pierce.
Fancy! aspect of the brain,
From whose dreams low thoughts abstain;
Aspect sweet, with tidding voices
Cautioning which of ethereal choices
Should keep secure before our sight.
Then with Angel-sworn delight
Picture with such pigments rare
As imagination fair
Ever iridesces, for
Those who its high worth adore!
Fancy! thine are rarest minds;
Thee the emotive poet finds
Lasting in perfumes of song.
For thou playest in an Angel-throng.
Fancy! Only those who drink
At blessed Aganippe's brink—
Only those who bury deep
All their thoughts in waking sleep,
As the dreamer scans the mosses
And the flowered woods, where tosses
The prim orchid its pulpit-crest;
Only those who with real zest
All resign to the Heavenly Muse—
Those, O Fancy, thou may'st enthuse!
And with thy clear whispers wake
Thoughts, that, yonder, Angels take.

Fancy! Thou may'st languid lie
Where the silver waves untie
Woe's aculeate wreath, and glow
Gilds the ripples, where flowers flow
Down with musing's tepid stream!
Fancy! When the morn-rays gleam
When white Lucifer its sparkles
Weaves to pearly gossamers,
Over the pale blue sky; when stirs
From the chaplet the white lanner
And flaunts more proudly the tower's banner;
When the zenith-star its gold
Sparkles upon the awakening fold;
And the orient widens bright
Flooding o'er the retreating night

Fulgent streams of diamond-light;
When the dawn yet wavers 'tween
Shorl-hued night, with lambent sheen,
And the harbingers of Phoebus' wain;
Fondest Fancy, thou may'st fain
See some maiden open her eyes
To the transmuting opal-skies.
By some mossy bank, where a spring
Feels a tall tree's sorrowing;
Where the calmness of the woods
Seems, as when a Humbold broods;
Where the patter of the fells
Of some long-gone dancing tells;
See some maiden listen to notes
From the morning-songsters' throats;
See her slowly unloosen her kirtle
Hang it on a bough of myrtle;
And her fingers make to smile
The sky-imaging spring awhile;
Then, with dimples, rosy as the morn,
When the delicate tints are born
She doth raise her long, black tress,
Then fall they down her loveliness.
Oh! then she drowns her lithe, firm frame
(Innocent—with not one shame!)
In the crystal depth of the cool
Refreshing, lonely fountain-pool.
Till she riseth from her bath,
As a Houri fair, that hath
Laved her young voluptuousness
In the perfumed water's holiness!

Fancy! thou may'st watch
The far beam upon a thatch:
Where the roses twine around
And gay flowers gem the ground:
And a daughter bendeth sweet
All before the scented feet;
Culling the rich lily—breaking
Sprays of rare Syringea—taking
From the thousand-petalled rose
One that sweetest fragrance blows;
Bending, as a Ruth 'mid corn,
(Ruth that culled at brilliant morn)
Culling sheld Crysanthemums
And the wan bud, that o'er tombs

Spends its deathly odors frank,
And the many pinks that prank
Themselves with the hues of even;
Then, with the bunch, tint as rainbows, driven
By fair Hebe o'er old Tyflis' glade,
She, with blushing cheeks, and staid
Carriage of her maiden-charms,
And upon her eyes alarms
Of shy girlyhood—she doth stand!
Oh! then all the posy's brand
Flimmering with flower-love
She tenders to thee, so to prove
What her heart would wish to say:
Speedily—without delay!

Fancy! thou art a sorceress!
Not as Circe, with caress
To delude—ensnare—entice;
But draped in a robe of bice
Whose ample folds conjure up the sweets
Of pure thought; whose laugh-face greets
Even glummest brow; and rends
The very chain that care-life sends!
Thou hast sheer, melodious power
Melancholy minds to dower
With a profuse, egregious store
Of such ecstacy, that only those
May experience, when life's woes
Are encrusted in the past,
And ambitions no more last;
And if hardships come, or not—
Well—'tis all the wish of God!

Fancy! now I bid thee well!
I thank thee for thy tendered spell!
I may call thee when I choose
Thy sweet friendship I'll not lose.
When I wish thee, as some one—
Whom I love, and love alone—
Thou wilt hasten o'er to me:
As some delicate mountain-bee
Thrids thro long and sweet pine-alleys;
O'er the pasture-giving valleys;
Humms by lichened rocks; reclines

In some lonely knoll's moss-vines;
Till it drones o'er fairest fields,
Where the moisture rich soil yields;
On, to homes, where lilacs pale
Listen to its promised tale!
Come then, come, O Fancy dear!
I shall be thy love-beaupeer!
Thanks, O Fancy! thanks; and more
Than a lover, from his core,
Says to her who crimsons deep
Hearkning: "This vow ever keep!"
I may kiss thee when I choose.
Thy pure converse I'll not lose.
When I long for thine embrace,
Come in thy peculiar grace—
Letting all thy dreamings be
Rich with runes of Purity!

(1886)

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